

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

General Guidelines for in-person gatherings at St. Thomas

Phase 4

Amended October 18, 2021

Covid Case numbers will continue to be monitored via this website:
<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>

The Vestry authorizes the Covid task force to continue to monitor the case numbers for our area and to make any emergency decisions regarding suspension of activities. The Covid task force will email the vestry prior to notifying the parish of any changes in activity level. In the event a person who attended a St. Thomas gathering reports a positive test within five days of the gathering, all in-person activities will be suspended for 10 days from the time of the exposure.

Requirements for those Attending

- Masks are optional for vaccinated individuals and required for all unvaccinated individuals over the age of 2 indoors. Masks will be available upon request. Clergy will mask to distribute communion indoors.
- Information about contact tracing will be printed in the bulletin.
- Parishioners who are sick or at high risk are asked to stay home and worship online.
- The entire worship service will be printed in single-use worship booklets.

Reservation Process

Reservations are no longer needed.

Check-in Procedures

A sign-in sheet will be at each worship service for worshippers to mark their attendance for contact tracing purposes.

Contact Tracing Notice

If you test positive for COVID-19 within 5 days of attending this worship service or gathering, please notify the church office or one of the clergy immediately. Your confidentiality will be maintained, but we will notify those who were present that they may have possibly been exposed to the virus. We will also notify the health department and Canon Loren Lasch on the bishop's staff in accordance with Diocesan policy.

If you have been present at a worship service or other event at St. Thomas with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within 5 days of this gathering, we will notify you immediately that you may have been exposed to the virus. All confidentiality will be maintained.

Rest Rooms

Rest Rooms are open in the parish hall. Signs will be posted that request social distancing.

Food and Beverages

Food and beverages may be provided both inside and outside. Ideally, food will be individually portioned, preferably in closed containers, and set out ahead of time. If that is not an option, a server will need to be in place to serve the food items to those present. When consuming food or beverages, unvaccinated people not in the same household should sit at least six feet apart.

Nursery

Child care may be provided during worship services.

Indoor and Outdoor Worship Guidelines

Music, Singing and Processions

Singing is allowed. Processions while singing are allowed if all processing are fully vaccinated or masked.

Offering Plate

Offering plate will be passed during the service.

Passing the Peace

Passing of the peace is allowed with no restrictions.

Communion Guidelines

Indoors, ushers will direct communicants by rows to receive communion at the altar rail. Communicants who would like communion brought to them, should notify an usher who will notify clergy.

Outdoors, communicants seated under the pavilion will come forward to receive communion. Communicants on golf carts may remain seated for the clergy to come to them.

Communicants are asked to keep their hands as flat as possible when receiving communion to help the clergy avoid cross contamination.

Bread and the common cup may be distributed. However, intinction will not be allowed. Communicants must drink from the common cup if they choose to receive the wine.

Baptisms, Weddings, Confirmations, and Funerals are now available, but all guidelines must be followed, and the Rector must be consulted.

Third Party and Small Groups Usage

All third-party groups who want to use indoor or outdoor space must agree to follow the small group policy and must be approved by the Rector and Senior Warden. A representative of a third-party group must sign a liability waver provided by the church.

Small groups from the church may meet after clearing the date on the church calendar with the parish administrator.